

Political Report of the President, Malusi Gigaba, to the 22nd National Congress of the African National Congress Youth League at NASREC, Johannesburg, on August 19th, 2004

Introduction

The names of the founding fathers are foremost in our minds today as we commence with the 22nd National Congress of the ANC Youth League a mere 22 days before we also celebrate our 60th Anniversary.

In so doing, we will recount the last six decades of the existence of the ANC Youth League, and reminisce about the legendary gallantry of our youth on the battle-field, in celebrating the Herculean contribution of the youth of South Africa towards the attainment of our freedom.

Accordingly, we are today duty-bound to salute the founding fathers of our organisation, among whom were Anton Lembede, AP Mda, Dr. William Nkomo, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Dr. Mxolisi Majombozi and many others, whose vision and boldness raised the level of our struggle and inspired millions of our people, as well as successive generations of young people, fundamentally changing the course and pace of our struggle, the character of the ANC and the history of our country.

It is therefore my singular honour, on behalf of our National Executive Committee, to welcome you all to this, the 22nd National Congress.

I am confident that as we settle down to the urgent business of the Congress, we will be mindful of the urgent tasks ahead of us, and conscious of the high expectations that the youth have of our gathering.

This occasion of our National Congress affords us the opportunity to account for our stewardship over the past period, and yet, at the same time, as the National Parliament of the youth of South Africa, to devise the strategies and map out plans for a bolder and better future.

Six decades of militant and disciplined youth struggles for national liberation

When the ANCYL was formed six decades ago at the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg, the Second World War was close to an end, and Nazism was virtually defeated.

However, a local brand of Nazism was on the rise in South Africa, and on the verge of an historic victory, propelled by the most backward, narrow and lunatic material interests of racial supremacy.

Accordingly, the birth of the ANCYL was occasioned by the concrete material conditions at the time, when objective reality demanded that the struggle must enter its new phase of mass defiance and militant resistance, infused with the adventurism, fearlessness and energy of youth.

Announcing its birth, the ANCYL stated, "The hour of youth has struck!" Over the coming years, decades and phases of the struggle, the youth were to become a central feature of the struggle, enmeshed deeply in the ANC, and part of all the struggles led by the ANC.

Through that experience, we developed the profound knowledge that our aspirations and interests as youth were similar to those of our people as a whole; that ours was a revolution of the whole people for the whole people, and that we therefore always had to conduct ourselves in a manner to which our people could relate.

For sixty years, we have carried the name of the ANC and donned its colours with great responsibility and dignity, believing as our predecessors did, that the ANC had "a great purpose and mission" and that it was "the symbol and embodiment of the African's will to present a united national front against all forms of oppression..."

As such, we have faithfully complied with the covenant into which we were committed by our predecessors, to **lay our services at the disposal of the ANC** "in the firm belief, knowledge and conviction that the cause of Africa must and will triumph". Over these six decades, therefore, the ANCYL and the ANC have been indispensable to each other.

When it was founded, the ANCYL declared its intentions to promote a national consciousness, African Nationalism, to defend and advance the unity of the ANC, and to ensure that the youth have direct access to the leadership of the Congress.

Thus, the ANCYL became not only a home to the South African youth, it also brought the youth and the ANC leadership into direct contact with each other, to ensure that they mutually influenced each other, and to bridge the generation gap between the younger and older activists of the movement.

We became at one time the youth organization of the ANC and the ANC organization of the youth. We brought into the ANC political renewal and organisational vibrancy, prompting it to become a mass based and radical movement for the liberation of the African people.

Throughout the struggle, the ANCYL strove hard to fire the youth with the enthusiasm to fight the tyrannical regime, and, in that process to overcome their fear for its forces of oppression, and thus to participate in the struggle regardless of what demands it exacted of them and regardless of whatever pain the regime could inflict upon them.

Indeed, the ANCYL provided the youth with a purpose and a mission, being part of all the struggles fought by the youth, and in the process teaching them discipline. Over time, the ANCYL and the youth became almost synonymous, each indispensable to the other.

Our progressive Africanist perspective and our African Nationalism has made the ANCYL what it is today - a reliable ally of the progressive international youth movement for freedom, democracy, peace and justice, a loyal and trusted friend of all those that are oppressed.

To have, therefore, to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of such a glorious movement is both an honour and a privilege!

1994: The dawn of a new era!

Our sixtieth anniversary, coinciding as it does with the celebration of the first decade of our freedom, brings with it new challenges and possibilities, both for the struggle and our organisation as a whole.

This Congress will deliberate on the lessons of the past sixty years, the challenges that were posed to the organisation by the past decade of freedom, and the implications for the future of our organisation as a whole so that it is better positioned to discharge its responsibilities and mandates.

Ten years ago, we ended three centuries of colonialism and apartheid, and thus gained the political freedom that gave us many possibilities and opportunities that could never be achieved within the framework of the system of racial tyranny, heralding the dawn of the new era, during which, earnestly we could begin to unravel the tragic legacy of colonialism.

We have, therefore, over the past ten years, proceeded systematically and yet urgently towards the fulfilment of these objectives, maintaining the perspective that ours is a people-driven and people-centred transformation, and that the struggle continues, albeit under new conditions.

The ANC has continued to be regarded by all our people, at home and abroad, including its adversaries, as an accomplished leader of the people of South Africa and the principal architect of the new democratic order.

Consequently, none can dare challenge us when we say, The ANC Lives!
The ANC Leads!

ADAPT OR DIE! The challenge of organisational renewal

Given the advent of democracy in 1994, which created new conditions for the pursuit of our strategic objective to create a non-racial and non-sexist democratic society, Peter Mokaba summed up the most urgent challenge that faced the ANCYL at that moment as, to adapt or die!

The crucial challenge was how to adapt the ANCYL politically and organisationally to suit the new epoch, which had thrust our generation at a rare historical moment, making ours the first and only generation of youth that would occupy the period of the transition between the old apartheid society and the new democratic society.

At its inception in 1944, the ANCYL was given the historic task to confront the arrogance of white domination, which meant, first and foremost, leading the youth in disciplined and militant resistance to oppression.

The role of the youth itself was seen in relation to the overall objective to dismantle the apartheid state and system. As a result, for close to fifty years, our youth remained in the front-line of resistance and confrontation with the racist state, in a valiant act that earned them the admiration and adoration of the whole nation and the world.

The dawn of freedom in 1994 concluded that long epic process and created the urgency not only to craft a new mission for the youth, but also to re-mould ourselves in a manner in sync with the new political challenges.

It is against this background that we have carefully approached the, challenging and exciting path to transform the ANCYL into an organisation that is relevant in the new democratic era.

Our new battle cry is, “*Seize the opportunities of democracy!*”

When it was formed, the first generation of our ANCYL leaders coined the slogan, “Freedom in our Lifetime”, and thus imposed upon themselves and those that succeeded them the heavy responsibility to work hard to fulfil this mission until it was achieved.

The defeat of the apartheid system in 1994 meant the fulfilment of this mission, creating the conditions for the new generations of the youth to break with the mission and tasks of the preceding generations, and to commit themselves to a new mission.

The most critical challenge facing the people of South Africa today is the reconstruction and development of our country, in the face of widespread poverty. Over the next decade, the ANC is tasked to lead this process, to ensure the full integration of the majority of the people into the modern, productive and developed, and thus to emancipate them from the legacy of the colonial and apartheid economies that had marginalised them.

The vital question we need collectively to answer, as a generation is, what does freedom mean and what does it mean to be a free young person!

During the 21st National Congress in 2001, in Mangaung, we said that ours was a generation at work to build a better life; that we were united in action for change in pursuit of our own mission to accomplish the struggle for the creation of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society.

The definite space and time that we occupy imposes on us the obligation to realise the purpose of our own existence, and hence to make a contribution to the never-ending struggle of humanity for progress.

Democracy means that the youth must bear the principal responsibility for the people's struggle for total liberation and upliftment; they must be at the forefront of efforts to resolve all the problems facing our people.

They must carry the hopes of the nation and be responsible in the execution of the struggle, always being available to provide ever-lasting solutions to the vexing problems our people face. Hence, the need for the youth today to swap the slogans "Freedom in our Lifetime" with the slogan, "Seizing the Opportunities of Democracy!"

At the re-internment ceremony for our founding President Anton Lembede, in 2002, we declared the decade leading to the centenary of the ANC in 2012, to be the "Decade of Youth Action to Seize the Opportunities of Democracy", during which youth must act decisively to take advantage of and expand the superb prospects that have been created by our young democracy, in the spirit of *Vuk'uzenzele!*

Continuity and Change!

The convening of this Congress, coinciding as it does with the celebrations of our organisation's 60th Anniversary as well as the First Decade of our Democracy, concludes an important chapter in the proud history of the ANCYL, and ushers in a new phase with concomitant tasks that the organisation must pursue, thus presenting a unique opportunity to re-affirm the historic legacy of our organisation whilst at the same time changing tactics in preparation of the new battles ahead.

During this phase, we must spread the roots and influence of the organisation further among the youth and our people as a whole, especially among the younger generations, and strengthen its basic units, the branches, so that they take charge and carry the burden of the political mobilisation, organisation and education of the youth and to champion their socio-economic development and empowerment.

This Congress must therefore issue a call to all our members and the youth – ***Seize the opportunities of democracy in order to confront the future!*** This

call constitutes our pledge to the youth of South Africa that we shall continue to provide them with principled and fearless leadership, and that we will continue to be part of all their political and socio-economic struggles.

It is, at the same time, a clarion call to youth to both to forge a youth contract for a better life, and to be frontline activists in the people's contract to eradicate poverty and create work – to **FIGHT** for a better life, as an integral part of the people's contract; to **PRODUCE** through work, skills development and self-employment and to **LEARN** in order to develop the knowledge and skills requisite for the building of the new society.

At this Congress we shall embrace the principle of continuity and change to communicate a special message to the youth of country and all our people that we remain faithful to and proud of our legacy and history and are even more committed to find innovative ways to confront and seize the future.

Our 60th Anniversary is thus a moment to step up gear, to raise the level of the struggle to a new and higher level, to do things in a different way.

The Congress must demonstrate this need for change, embracing new forms of organisation, ideas and programmes, whilst continuing, in the new period, to pursue the goals we set sixty years ago.

The realignment process

The 22nd National Congress consummates the quantitative and qualitative journey we have traversed since the 21st National Congress, which was more than just the mere dissolution of the branches and the formation of the new ward-based branches.

Through this process, we sought to renew and deepen our organisational system and democratic culture and practice. We have thus brought to a close the chapter of organisational renewal we had to embark upon following the defeat of apartheid.

The Secretary General's Report will reflect in detail the quantitative progress we have made.

Our achievements are thanks to the commitment of our cadres, the enthusiastic response of the youth, and the support, generally, of the ANC.

Accordingly, despite the steepness of the road ahead, compounded by the lack of material resources, we refused to resort to short cuts and we strictly adhered to the realignment guidelines we had set ourselves. Our cadres and activists undertook their tasks with temerity, reaching out to the youth across the length and breadth of the country.

This Congress is therefore a celebration of these efforts and achievements; a vindication of the sweat, the hard work and sacrifices of our activists! What it proves is that the ANCYL lives and continues to lead the youth of South Africa; that ours is the only organisation that can truly claim the authority to speak on behalf of the majority of the youth of South Africa!

The organisation that assembled at this Congress during these days can safely be called, **the future ANC!** Today's victories in building our Youth League assure us that tomorrow's ANC will continue to have resilient cadres whose commitment to it, and to our people's cause is insuperable.

The task of realignment has imparted on our activists invaluable organisational and political experiences, raising the critical challenge for our leadership at all tiers to provide persistent service to our membership.

Build the capacity of our branches to reach new heights of youth mobilisation and activism

The matters we have outlined above constitute the broad political and organisational framework under which this Congress assembles. They form the platform upon which to map our political and organisational tasks for the period ahead, and emphasise the point that the most important structure of our organisation is the branch, the nerve-centre of our organisation, home to the arduous task of mobilising, uniting, educating, organise and providing leadership to the youth.

It is here in branches that youth are brought into the struggle for reconstruction and development, as well as for their own development and empowerment. It is in branches that all young people forge their first political and organisational consciousness and experiences, where activists are grinded into cadres and cadres developed into leaders, both for our movement and our country.

When we demand therefore that our branches must be constituted in a strictly democratic way, and when we demand that they must function in a democratic manner, guided by the principle of the democratic centralism, it is only because the youth must be taught the best traditions of a democratic mass organisation that leads society as a whole, so that when they graduate into the ANC, they have imbued the best culture and traditions.

Related to this is therefore the nature of the programmes that our branches are implementing, and the manner that they are doing so.

This raises the urgent need to sharpen our branch capacity in order better and more effectively to reach out to the youth, mobilising and empowering them to seize the opportunities created by freedom.

This means turning our branches into catalysts for youth political activism and socio-economic empowerment. The Youth League branch must be a reference point for the youth in local communities, which summons them into action to wage political and socio-economic struggles. It must impart on them the political and organisational experiences they desperately require in order better to become activists for reconstruction and development.

This will also require that we must develop new kinds of skills and capacity, and cultivate our members ideologically in a concerted and consistent manner, to empower them with the capacity to understand and pursue, as good revolutionary democrats, the strategic objective of our revolution.

Defending the ANCYL and its relations with the ANC!

Leading the youth in this historic endeavour is the ANC Youth League aptly described by President Mbeki during our 21st National Congress as a militant organisation of young revolutionary democrats.

The ANCYL is an organised body of opinion within the ANC, and a mass political youth organ of the ANC. Its broad tasks are to,

- spread its ideas and culture among the youth; in order to guarantee the ANC's future;
- provide young people with an organisation of their own wherein, whilst remaining within the fold of the ANC, they would forge independent political and organisational experiences in order to be ready, when their time comes, to lead the ANC and in fact society itself;

- imbue the ANC with fresh ideas, with political dynamism and organisational vibrancy;
- defend and advance the unity and integrity of the ANC;
- bring the youth into direct contact with the leadership of Congress and bridge the generation gap between the young and old activists of the movement;
- provide a platform for debate among the youth of all the challenges and problems facing South Africa, Africa and the world.

For these reasons, the ANC must nurture and give political, organisational and material support to the ANCYL as a whole, as an organisation, and ensure that it participates in all the decision-making structures of the ANC as an integral component part of the ANC itself.

Recently, certain tendencies opposed to the ANC, including some leadership-mongering and self-seeking opportunists have sought to turn the ANCYL into:

- an anti-ANC instrument in the name of spurious left-wing militancy;
- an instrument for the fulfilment of their personal and material greed that have nothing to do with the strategic objective of the ANC; and
- a threat which must be suppressed, denied access to resources and marginalised from the programmes of the ANC, merely because we took principled positions to the discomfort of these opportunists.

Since its foundation, the Youth League has believed that the ANC “is the symbol and embodiment of the African’s will to present a united national front against all forms of oppression...”

Hence we have insisted on its unity and cohesion, its militancy and discipline, informed by the belief that a militant struggle demands strict discipline. Lack of discipline can make a militant and heroic struggle degenerate into chaos; just as discipline without militancy can render a revolutionary struggle blunt.

Therefore, we have consistently rejected the thesis both that the League to be militant must, by definition, be anti-ANC and not disciplined. We have rejected the falsehood that our organisation’s militant past was predicated on being anti-ANC. And, we have rejected the untruth that the ANCYL was

formed to fight the ANC, depose its leadership and take the ANC over along the path of anarchy and hooliganism defined as left-wing militancy.

We stated in our founding Manifesto in 1944 that the ANCYL's formation was an answer and assurance to the critics of the ANC that African Youth will not allow the struggles and sacrifices of their fathers to have been in vain, and that it was also a protest against the lack of discipline inside the ANC. The ANCYL participates in all the decision-making structures of the ANC, and as such, we utilise these as our platform to engage the ANC.

The opportunists and ANC opponents have accused the League of being less militant for refusing to be anything other than the Youth League of the ANC, and have found the demand that we should be a loyal and disciplined ANC organisation while simultaneously serving as our movement's most vehement opponents bizarre.

We have, therefore, left the task of opposing the ANC to its genuine opponents, whilst conducting ourselves as its loyal activists and agents for its historic cause. We have refused to define militancy to mean opposition to the ANC as this would make Tony Leon the most militant among us.

In our opinion, militancy and discipline are prerequisites for revolutionary activism; they promote the unity and cohesion of the movement and sharpen its activists and programmes.

We have always upheld the view that membership of the ANC imposes an enormous responsibility to serve the people, and thus to behave in a manner that inspires, rather than deter, confidence in the movement.

We have rejected the falsehood that to mouth slogans and rhetoric or to wear a revolutionary looking t-shirt and cap defines a person as militant.

There are those who appear to believe that they must use their ANC membership to gain access to material gain, in pursuit of which they divide and corrupt the movement and its cadres, using material incentives to take advantage of the economic plight of many young people.

These people are found even within the senior ranks of the ANC, always ready to disburse money in order to buy themselves favours and fanatical henchmen who do not give a hoot about the unity, the discipline and

organisational culture and traditions of the organisation – who neither know nor care about what a revolutionary organisation is and how should revolutionary cadres conduct themselves in a revolutionary organisation during a revolutionary period.

Accordingly, the ANCYL must continue to defend itself as well as the ANC, and persist along the path the established culture and traditions.

The Character of the ANC Youth League

The ANCYL is a product of a given historical period, formed for a specific political and historical purpose to galvanise the struggle. It has over the years evolved into an organisation that embraces the principle of non-racialism as a guide to its composition as well as its day-to-day operations.

In line with the ANC approach of equality, and its recognition of the oppression suffered by women, we have embraced the principle of non-sexism. The ANCYL therefore also seeks to mobilise and organise young women, as an integral part of the youth movement and as a political school for women activists of the ANC and the ANC Women's League, and also champions their socio-economic interests.

It is a political and organisational preparatory school of the young revolutionary democrats of the movement, whose autonomy is vital to the grounding of the youth into politics. It always conducts itself as a disciplined and militant organ of the ANC and the youth, adhering to the strictest principles of democratic centralism, never seeking to use discipline to suppress democratic debate and democracy within the movement.

The ANCYL is a leading force among the South African youth. This leadership role derives from the current tasks of the NDR, the historic mission of the ANC, the positioning and role of the ANCYL within that, its character and tasks among the youth and in society. This leadership role and responsibility must be reinforced, advanced and defended at all times. Its cadres have an obligation therefore to ensure that its perspectives, policies and programmes are hegemonic among the youth in society.

The traditional base of the ANCYL is the black working class, rural poor and lower-middle strata, including a large number of the out-of-school and unemployed youth. Consequently, it is biased towards the poor and working

people and recognises the leadership role of the working class in the struggle and the process of social transformation.

However, the removal of the repressive socio-economic laws of apartheid has broadened its base to include in its ranks the professionals and aspirant young business people. This sector is both increasing within the ranks of the ANCYL, and is battling for role-definition.

We need to tap on their intellectual capital and expertise to strengthen both the ANCYL as well as the role and leadership position of the African working class youth. We must continue to bring to the attention of these youth groups the identification and primacy of the common objectives and programme of national democracy.

Therefore, whilst it is working class biased, it is a broad multi-class mass organisation of the youth that brings the youth into the ANC and the struggle and champions their all-round political and socio-economic aspirations. In its ranks, it draws students and other social interests among the youth whose contribution is vital to the mobilisation of the youth for the NDR.

Students organisations in the Progressive Youth Alliance have a crucial role to play to imbue the students with the Congress spirit and reproduce the ideas of the ANC among them; to explain to the students the current tasks of our epoch and their responsibilities as students, to politicise them and deepen their political and social consciousness and activism, their organisational experience, culture and discipline; to channel their energies and militancy; to deepen their patriotism; to inculcate in them progressive ideas and the pursuit of progressive information and knowledge; to mobilise them into activities that shall develop out of them organic intellectuals and to encourage them to learn and equip themselves with the skills and knowledge that will make their contribution to the struggle formidable.

At the same time, young communists join the ANCYL as individuals, and not as an organisation or collective. As members of the ANCYL, they are bound by the same organisational discipline; adhere to and represent the same political directive, policies, culture and traditions as other members, and advance its ideas and leadership position amongst the youth. They must assist the ANCYL defeat factionalism and sectarianism, to grow and develop both in organisational stature and political maturity.

In that regard, within the ANCYL there is not left-wing platform, nor is there is a sub-organisation of young communists who must present themselves as a platform, a conspiratorial group or a faction. The ANCYL has an obligation to fight against and defeat factionalism and sectarianism.

The PYA is thus a crucial organ for the pursuit of both the agenda of youth mobilisation and development. As a formation, it is an organisational expression of the participation of youth in the national struggle. In itself, it brings together progressive social formations bound together by a common vision of a non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous and democratic South Africa, and is drawn together by a common recognition of the leadership role of the working class in our revolution. Individually and collectively, these organisations that constitute the PYA recognise the leadership role of the ANC as well as the importance of the united action of the tripartite alliance.

In this sense therefore, the PYA is a vital instrument that reinforces the ANCYL's agenda to mobilise the youth for the pursuit of the NDR and for the strengthening of the ANC, and for the pursuit of the goals for an integrated youth development agenda. It represents the common purpose and unity in action that these organisations and their constituencies share. Therefore, the PYA is not an organisation! Member organisations of the PYA must respect each other's independence and organisational integrity.

There are other social formations that, whereas they represent other sectoral interests, such as non-governmental and religious, cultural and other youth organisations, but share the same short-term or long-term goals with us. They recognise our leadership and trust us not to exploit them. We must work with them and support their campaigns, to the extent that they are progressive and result in both youth development and in the progression of our struggle, and hence fulfil the goals of the NDR.

As a result of democracy, many of our cadres are either public representatives, serving in the legislative and executive arms of government, or they are public servants at all tiers of government. This has meant that we sharpen our capacity to work with government and the legislatures, to bring to their attention the various and varied concerns and interests of the youth. These activists are expected to champion the rights and interests of the youth where they serve, and to represent loyally the agenda of the ANCYL.

The existence of the youth development troika – the National Youth Commission (NYC), the South African Youth Council (SAYC) and the Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF) – has concluded the process to ensure that the youth development agenda is given impetus.

These three organisations must unite and work as a single unit, pursuing an integrated youth development agenda, and must therefore reinforce each other. This imposes enormous challenges on the ANCYL to continue to pull them together in order to impart on them a vision and a programme.

The new challenges have found us in a situation where many of our cadres are out-of-work, and hence susceptible to any sort of mobilisation within the movement by leadership-mongering individuals offering them material incentives to advance their ignoble causes. Many among our cadres and activists have thus been imbuing wrongful and “*uncadrely*” behaviour. This has sharply thrown open the question of a strong youth cadre policy, employment programme and ideological education.

Self-seeking individuals have also infiltrated and swelled the ranks of the ANCYL, sneaking strange cultures into the organisation and threatening its unity and cohesion, promoting alien practices and other abominable conduct in the name of left-wing beliefs and practice. We owe it to our rich heritage to defeat these tendencies.

Creating the democratic state

Revolutions are about winning state power and using it to transform the new state in line with the vision and interests of the new ruling social forces.

Accordingly, the democratic state we sought to create upon victory over apartheid would be a developmental state whose instruments would be used in pursuit of the goals of social transformation.

Outlining the political tasks of the democratic state, Uncle Jack Simon had said that: “Our revolution will carry out the tasks that the bourgeoisie failed to accomplish. We will sweep away the garbage of feudal-colonial racism; liberate the economy from the political controls that hamper the growth of production forces; overcome the boycotts, sanctions and isolation imposed by the international community on the Afrikaner regime; open the doors to our people and trade in Africa and elsewhere; improve living standards for

all in town and country; and make South Africa a decent, civilised home for all who live in it”.

This drew attention not only to the real nature of oppression in South Africa, but also to the fact that the movement had envisaged an active state that would play a direct role in the building of a people’s democracy: to democratise the country, and create the conditions for the re-configuration of property relations, and to regulate and govern political, social and economic engagement in society in favour of the hitherto oppressed majority and to harness resources requisite for development.

Compounding the challenges facing the new state we sought to create was the coincidence, at the point of our freedom, of the existence of the sunset clauses and the all-out offensive by the rampant forces globalisation underpinned by the principles of market fundamentalism. This constrained the speed with which we could unleash the developmental angle of the new state, leading us to tread with caution.

This was because the dominant forces of globalisation propounded the notion that the markets, by themselves, would lead to development and poverty eradication in the developing world, and opposed any government intervention in the process.

This was despite the widespread evidence, especially in developing countries wrecked by stringent rules of the IMF and the World Bank, that markets were working imperfectly, and thus on their own they could not solve inequality, poverty and unemployment.

The reality, however, is that in their own development, the developed countries relied on strong and active states. Even now, the EU spends R54b towards the development of its underdeveloped areas, more than it spends on developing countries. A great part of this development aid is dedicated towards strengthening the state, precisely because these advocates of a weak state know this very well that the markets cannot resolve the problems of uneven development, even within the developed countries themselves.

During globalisation, multinational companies, including institutions of multilateral governance such as the IMF and the World Bank, become ideological arsenals in the campaign to weaken states in developing countries, to ensure both that the pattern of uneven development is not

broken, to keep developing countries in their place, and to continue to exploit their raw materials.

The tendency of capitalism is to develop and create more wealth for the increasing few, to destroy the weak and condemn entire populations to poverty and backwardness. Therefore, the democratic state bears the direct responsibility to ensure that property relations are de-racialised and re-configured, that the First Economy continues to grow and that there is a deliberate and systemic transfer of resources from the First to the Second Economy in order to develop the latter and integrate it into the mainstream.

The experience of the developing countries makes a strong argument for a strong state if growth is to happen hand-in-glove with development as markets on their own can lead to growth, but not development.

Surely, were we to embrace the neo-liberal paradigm in 1994, and leave it to the market forces alone to resolve the glaring socio-economic iniquities inherited from centuries of colonial and apartheid misrule, South Africa would not have made such social and economic progress that it has during the past decade – socio-economic disparities would have deepened.

The reality is that as a result of the prudent, albeit unpopular, economic decisions we had taken in the past, the democratic state has been able to generate productive capital sufficient to wage a sustained offensive against poverty and underdevelopment; to intervene to strengthen the developed, modern and productive sector of the economy and assist it to grow, in order to generate the resources requisite to intervene in the marginalised and underdeveloped economy.

This is vital to development in the developing countries precisely because despite the large volumes of capital, technology, skills, information and knowledge available for humanity to be able to obliterate poverty, ignorance, disease and underdevelopment, precisely because these are the property of an alarmingly few, inequality has continued to deepen unabated.

Deepening democracy

Over the past decade, we succeeded to establish the democratic dispensation that proclaimed to all our people not only civil and liberal liberties, but that

also outlawed poverty and proclaimed social and economic rights, including redress for the black majority.

We have also held democratic elections for all the tiers of our government, and each time there was enthusiastic participation by the masses of our people, especially the youth, thus giving concrete expression to the notion that **The People Shall Govern!**

A decade since the victory we scored in 1994, our relentless people have given the ANC an overwhelming mandate to govern the rest of the country, including in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, in the conviction that only the ANC can, may and will lead them along the path to a better life.

This imposed on it the obligation never to take for granted and undermine the overwhelming confidence of the ordinary masses of our people, as well as the challenge on the ANC to mobilise and engage the masses of the people to ensure their maximum and enthusiastic participation in the process and systems of democratic governance.

During the door-to-door campaign, we succeeded to re-affirm the character of the ANC as an organisation of the people that lives among and leads them in the historic task to defeat the system of racial inequality. The campaign confirmed the ANC as a movement of the people, for people, by the people.

The masses of our people have continued to lend vibrancy to our democracy, utilising the space provided by the Constitution to exercise their rights to lobby, canvass and advocate for both their national or most localised demands and rights. They have done this through mass campaigns and public hearings, izimbizo and other programmes to interact with their government, MPs and MPLs, and Councillors.

The challenge to our democratic governance system is to harmonise the functioning of the three tiers of government as envisaged in the Constitution, to ensure that they all adhere to the principle of cooperative governance and thus enhancing their capacity to discharge their responsibilities.

However, we must further strengthen all the arms of government, and ensure that each one of them plays their part in the consolidation of democracy, and enforce the concept of the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial bodies, to avoid duplication and confusion.

In particular, the judiciary has in certain vital instances acted in manner that has raised the ire of our organisation in respect of its insensitive sentences in countless cases of racism, where it failed to protect the rights of the victims of racism, creating the impression that the perpetrators of these crimes can go ahead to commit them with impunity.

Perhaps, this Congress needs to propose that the government, having outlawed racism and racial discrimination and hate speech, must investigate the possibility of imposing a minimum sentence on those that perpetuate racism and racial acts.

Social Transformation

The progress we have made during the past decade in creating a new social reality has been nothing short of phenomenal, bearing in mind that to restructure South African society in order to eliminate the grave consequences of apartheid would be a difficult endeavour that would demand immense material and human resources.

These achievements of the first decade impose an enormous obligation on us during the second decade to intensify the campaign against poverty, TB, malaria, cholera, and re-affirm the ANC's comprehensive approach to the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

Education Transformation

The progress we have made during the last decade in education has imposed on us the obligation to address certain challenges, including:

- the role the state needs to play to provide early-child education to reduce the exorbitant cost of this vital education for the children of poor parents;
- providing the vocational education, enhancing the further education and training sector and providing post-matric programmes to absorb Grade 12 graduates and equip them with skills and functional literacy;
- ensuring greater alignment between education and training, and ensure that School Governing Bodies comply with the principle that the children of the poor are not forced to pay the school fees they do not have;
- intensifying the training and development programme of the teachers in order to raise their competencies;

- recruiting and encouraging more of the best among Grade 12 graduates to study for teaching, especially in the fields of mathematics, natural and economic sciences;
- making history and African languages mandatory for all learners, both black and white, in all public schools, and encourage, as much as possible, African children to learn in their mother-tongue for the first three years of their schooling, which is vital to their development;
- intensifying civic education and promoting the national symbols and the principles that underpin our democracy and Constitution, which must include regularly hoisting the flag in every school;
- intensifying the campaign to raise the funding for the national students financial aid scheme and its effectiveness, the balance between the loan and grant and the funding formula for institutions;
- continuing to transform higher education through the mergers, curriculum review, ensuring that they also take responsibility for the employability of their graduates, and together with this paying urgent attention to the gross lack of visionary leadership among higher education managers, resulting in the senseless and unnecessary disturbance of learning;
- urgently capitalising some of the historically African higher education institutions so that they become centres of excellence; and
- encouraging all learners and students to be conscientious in raising their reading and writing skills, their communications abilities and their language and grammar proficiency.

The Congress must clearly pronounce what needs to be done in order to promote our national culture and arts, including the performing arts, in order to stimulate creativity and genius among our youth.

At the same time, we must continue to campaign for sports and recreational facilities in our communities, to provide the youth with social alternatives and opportunities.

In this regard, government must ultimately enforce the transformation code in order to:

- broaden the sports codes especially in black townships and rural areas, and expand adequately equipped sports facilities in these areas;
- develop sufficient sports administrators among the youth, through schools and community sports organisations, and

- transform sports, especially those hitherto riddled with racism and racial discrimination, through quotas, amongst others!

Expanding the material base for prosperity

Ten years ago, the South African economy was in such dreadful morass that to lift it out seemed only a distant and hollow pipedream, and yet it was evident from the outset that economic transformation stood at the heart of both national reconciliation and fundamental social change.

The prudent leadership and management of our economy during the past decade by our movement and government succeeded in lifting our economy out of its morass and transform it to positive growth.

Together with global neo-liberalism, we faced the hard fact that the forces of white minority rule had extracted from us during the negotiations period certain political and economic concessions, thus making our economic transformation difficult.

Accordingly, we have traversed the previous decade with great caution, taking a step backward if needed be, in order to make two giant strides forward. Ever during the Gear period, we continued to raise social expenditure, deploying the public resources towards poverty alleviation, education and health.

Today, social income has helped alleviate poverty among many of our people. However, social grants are unsustainable and have the effect to the education and health budget in real terms. We must build an economy that creates the real capacity for sustainable livelihoods amongst our people.

The ANC has continued to uphold the view that economic growth and development must and will reinforce each other. Accordingly, we have worked hard to harness all economic and social actors, including through NEDLAC and the GDS, towards the same objective, leading them to overcome some of their differences in order to focus on the most urgent socio-economic challenges facing our country.

We have the challenge to monitor the implementation of these resolutions and commitments to make sure that none among the stakeholders reneges on their commitments. At the same time, none among the stakeholders must

feel that they only have a parasitic relationship with other stakeholders; that their responsibility is only to police the others and demand that they deliver on their commitments, whilst making no contribution towards the fulfilment of these goals.

One of the urgent challenges we need to address has to do with continuing to direct domestic private capital to invest in the local economy, something they have shunned during our first decade of democracy.

Part of what has remained an urgent goal for our economic growth, especially given the serious challenge of unemployment, is the matter of skills, especially scarce skills that are urgently required both for the modernisation of our economy as well as for value-adding.

The skills intervention, albeit insufficient, has created the possibility for the expansion of our skills base, in order to increase production, employment and self-employment opportunities.

Our challenge is to continue to ensure that we engage the process of the skills strategy review, including the review of the SETAs, and to ensure that information and skills training is also expanded to reach the unemployed youth, especially rural and female youth.

Of course, a great and urgent challenge facing South Africa has to do with the upliftment of those in our society that are found in the underdeveloped and marginalised sectors of our economy, those who are without skills and were for many centuries the source of cheap labour, the beasts of burden, sustaining the colonial and apartheid systems, and their economies.

They find themselves stuck in the endless and vicious cycle of poverty, not because they so chose, but because the systems of colonialism and apartheid both created and relied on this landless, property-less, disenfranchised group of people that would serve their economic needs.

The cold reality is that these people are black, and mostly African; they are female and they are rural, which continues to underscore the national, class and gender character of our struggle. These people do not possess the resources to lift themselves up from this reality unless we strengthen the developmental state in order to unite the country in action and harness all the

resources required to deal decisively with these challenges, including through the transfer of the resources from the developed economy.

The market has neither the capacity nor the will to do this.

In that regard, two inter-related things need to be done: on the one hand, to continue to support the productive economy to grow and be strong, producing the requisite resources to address these challenges and, on the other hand, to invest massively in the social and economic infrastructure, and to raise the productive capacity of the underdeveloped areas.

Therefore, the various programmes we are pursuing, such as the rural development and the urban renewal strategies, the expanded public works programme, broad-based black economic empowerment, SMME and skills development and others are crucial elements of this effort to ensure that the underdeveloped areas are fully integrated in the rest of the economy.

In this regard, we need to ensure that the broad definition BEE gets translated to reality, especially in so far as young people, the poor and working people are concerned.

Youth development and empowerment

It is our ongoing task to wage an unrelenting struggle for youth development and empowerment.

Colonialism and apartheid had left deep scars on the socio-economic situation of the black youth. That youth development had to be part of the RDP was self-evident.

To us, youth development and empowerment refers to the programme both to redress the grave effects of apartheid on the black people, and the black youth in particular, and to empower the youth with the capacity fully and ably to participate in both society and economy.

To develop and empower the current generations of youth is vital precisely because of both the fact that there were, in large measure, the last generations of youth to suffer the vicious attacks of the apartheid system on black youth, and also because history had determined that this was to be the

first and only generation of youth to live during the moment of transition from the apartheid era into the democratic and prosperous future.

Over the past decade, steps have been taken to respond to this challenge of empowering the youth. Institutions for youth development have been created, and policies and programmes adopted, albeit inadequate. We remain with the urgent challenge to intensify these efforts and to raise the capacity of the youth to seize the opportunities of democracy through strengthening our branches in order have the capacity to assist the youth with the information and instruments for economic empowerment.

During this Congress, spend less time on rhetoric and pie-in-the-sky ideas and concentrate more on practical ideas and programmes that respond to the expectations of the youth. In commissions, we must focus on local actions that engage provincial and district/metro governments as well as the private sector in efforts to empower the youth economically.

We must ensure that all tiers of the ANC and government share our understanding of youth development, and thus provide the necessary political and material support for youth development and empowerment

And, we must raise the capacity of the youth development institutions we have created, and ensure that they are better equipped to discharge their responsibilities to meet today's challenges of youth development, drawing on the lessons learned during this past decade.

Fighting racism

For centuries our forebears fought for freedom and national self-determination. Over time, given the unique situation that the colonising and colonised forces both shared the same national boundary and had become a permanent reality of each other, ours became a struggle for the creation of a non-racial, nonsexist and prosperous South Africa.

At the heart of our revolution has always been the question of the liberation of the African people, in particular, and black people in general. This point was illuminated by Walter Sisulu, that: "The central feature of the revolution in South Africa is that it is an African revolution. In the first place, the oppression and exploitation of the African people is the pivot around which the whole system of white supremacy revolves... To speak of the African

revolution is to emphasise a fundamental aspect inherent to the structure of oppression, namely, that the liberation of the African people is a necessary condition for removing the oppression of all other national groups in South Africa”.

That truth remains pertinent today, defining not just the form but the very essence of our struggle during the phase of reconstruction and development.

But, it is also the fundamental truth of our struggle that racism is intricately enmeshed with white property ownership and gender discrimination. It has indeed “become a material force in its own rights and prevents any sizeable section of the whites from being drawn into the national liberation struggle”.

The principal question before this Congress is to make an assessment of whether we have, during the past decade, made any progress towards the accomplishment of the strategic objective! To do so, we must evaluate first the condition of the Africans, who are the mainstay of our revolution.

Spatial patterns, transportation systems and residential patterns, including the levels of employment and unemployment, health and ill-health, access or lack thereof to nutrition, justice, broader economic opportunities and social progress, all communicate the single and disconcerting message that racism is still alive and well in our country.

What complicates our progress in this regard is the fact that the productive capital needed to eliminate poverty and create social justice and equality remains in white hands, which, however, continues generally to resist supporting the project of national reconciliation and de-racialisation.

The sad reality is that the white community lacks wise and visionary leadership, the type that can help them break out of the paralysing fear and insecurity that racism imposes them. Therefore, we must propose the ways and means as the movement and government directly to engage with and interact with them, especially the working class and the poor, relying on the lessons drawn from the door-to-door campaign.

We must keep in our minds the President’ Political Report at the Stellenbosch Conference in 2002, that: “Put starkly, the black majority needs the involvement of the white community in the struggle to eliminate the racial disparities we inherited; the white minority needs the black majority in

the struggle to overcome the racial antagonisms created by a long history of colonialism and apartheid”.

At the same time, we must continue to pay serious attention to the Coloured and Indian groups, to reassure them that their destiny is one with that of the Africans. In that regard, we must exploit the opportunities created by the progress we made during the previous general elections that demonstrated steady but rising confidence in the ANC.

Defeat those that continue to harbour the illusions of racism

The persistence of racism in South Africa points to the correctness of the analysis that consistently emphasises the intricate relationship, rather than the difference, between the national, gender and class questions.

The principal representative of the racial and class forces of repression and exploitation is the DA, itself an offspring of these privileged interests, which has consistently held the view that fundamental social transformation constitutes a direct attack and threat to these racially-earned privileges. Precise for this reason, its leadership is unable to extricate itself from the parochial interests of the white group and the privileges they enjoy merely because of their membership of this group.

It is these material interests of this group, defined racially, that make the DA such rabid opponents of transformation. They wish for reconciliation that is devoid of fundamental social content.

The reality in our country, though, is that we must address the related challenges of non-racism and prosperity for all.

Those in our country who regard themselves as the leaders of the white community owe their positions directly to the persistence of racism and the material privileges that accrue from this. Accordingly, and in order to remain leaders, they mobilise the white community on the basis of racial fear, and present the interests of this community as separate from and opposed to those of their black compatriots.

Having replaced PW Botha’s National Party as the bulwark of white supremacy, the DA has wasted no time raising the false hope among our white compatriots that it can guarantee them the privileges derived from

colonialism and apartheid, according to which reconciliation would be forced to occur without social transformation; the propertied class would remain white and the property-less would be black.

A few black people would then be co-opted into the elite class of property owners, but they would remain so negligible that they would make no impact in the reconfiguration of property relations. In this way, racial contradictions would persist and the class stratification of colonial and apartheid South Africa would remain intact.

It is precisely this sort of twisted racial tripe that continues to hang on the necks of the white community as an albatross that only the ANC can relieve them of. The DA does not know how it could one day free the white minority from the very racial fears it is instilling in them.

The adoption of the Freedom Charter by the NNP, and its decision to dissolve and encourage its members to join the ANC, creates a fresh and real possibility that we will succeed in the task to diminish the white fears for the non-racial and democratic future and ultimately unite the masses of the people of South Africa as a whole.

Creating a non-sexist society

Integral to the question of total emancipation has always been the matter of the emancipation of women, the attainment of gender equality and the creation of a non-sexist society.

What we need to do in this regard is to wage a sustained offensive against these obstacles facing women, to achieve equity in wealth and income distribution as well as at the workplace, to expand access to socio-economic opportunities and professions, education, management and training.

As much as we have made great strides in the country in this regard, much more still needs to be done, especially to enhance the socio-economic condition of young women, and to deal with the subjective reasons for the oppression of women, which relate to culture, customs, the entrenched ideas and attitudes that result in their oppression, dehumanisation, rape, physical abuse, domestic violence and the economic marginalisation.

In this matter, we made the statement during the Political Report at the Mangaung 21st National Congress that: “As the ANCYL, we must lead our generation to an understanding that women emancipation and gender equality are a central pillar of our pursuit for the African Century, an anchor without which we cannot create a better life for all. Our generation must understand that the burden to ultimately to destroy sexism rests heavily on our shoulders. Further, we must vigorously pursue an all-round and integrated programme to promote gender equality among the youth and [within] our own organisation and champion the empowerment, development and affirmation of young women in all political, social and economic spheres”.

The progress we make in youth development and mobilisation will also depend exactly on breaking the disadvantage of young women.

In this regard, we must mobilise young women themselves to break-out of the pattern of silence and powerlessness, the pattern of resigning themselves to the social casts defined for them by the patriarchal society, to become active agents for their own empowerment, mobilisation and emancipation. They must strengthen and build young women’s movements and raise their capacity to contribute to the realisation of these objectives through, inter alia, politics activism. They must lead in raising their political consciousness and deepening their political understanding, activism and experience.

Further, they must study harder and improve their knowledge and skills, indeed to enhance their capacity in tackling all these challenges and they must participate actively in the economy.

Creating a better Africa

From [their] inception, the national liberation struggles in Africa have been marked by the recognition by all leading organisations that the liberation of the Africa people is a single process.

This is how Walter Sisulu described the pertinent tasks of the liberation struggles as a result of which we were then able to recognise our struggle’s inner unity with the continent-wide African revolution, as well as with the anti-colonial and progressive struggles throughout the world.

Accordingly, we made the statement in 2001 in the 21st National Congress Political Report that: “For as long as it has existed, the ANC has known that it was born of the African people and is a child of their struggle against colonialism. Our national oppression having itself grown of the colonisation of the rest of our continent, we have understood it that our struggle for national liberation is a struggle to free the rest of our continent from colonial bondage and consequently, our pursuit of the African Renaissance is inseparable from that of our national democracy”.

The essential challenges facing our continent are to achieve peace and stability, democracy and human rights for the African citizen and the pursuit of a better life for all. This is what the African Union, the successor of that historical Organisation of African Unity (OAU), must pursue through, amongst other, the NEPAD programme.

The formation of the AU was a watershed in the evolution of our continent’s struggle towards unity and self-determination! Speedily, it has begun to establish its structures and implement its principles and programme of action, immersed in all the peace efforts on the continent in DRC, Burundi, Liberia, Cote’ d’Ivoire, Sudan, Western Sahara and others. At the same time, there has been tremendous progress towards regional integration in all the five AU regions.

Obviously, ongoing attention will need to be paid to monitoring the situation in these countries, including in Western Sahara and Haiti to ensure that lasting solutions are found to end these conflicts.

This Congress must answer the question: what must the ANCYL do to assist the youth of these countries, including in Palestine and Iraq to contribute to the struggles for national sovereignty, peace, democracy and youth development in their countries!

This was a year during which we also commemorated the Rwandan genocide, reflecting sadly on humanity’s gross crime of inaction in the face of what obviously was a wanton and criminal slaughter of innocent people merely because they belonged to a different ethnic group.

The resounding message from the people of Rwanda is: **NEVER AGAIN!** What this tells us is that Africa needs to develop resources for self-reliance if her development and independence objectives must be met.

What is required is African unity in action for the integrated development of our continent. This unity in action must translate into the forging of a continent-wide progressive movement for Africa's Renaissance, at the helm of which must stand the former liberation movements, which must themselves be committed to peace, democracy and development.

Finally, this continent-wide progressive movement must harness its strength and unite in action in the global campaign for the transfer of resources – capital, technology, skills and information – towards the developing countries of the South, especially Africa. Therefore, it must forge conscious and active relations with like-minded forces across the globe.

Arising from this experience, we must continue to forge a broad progressive youth movement for a just world order and for Africa's development, a movement in which the South African youth will play a prominent role.

We will have to work swiftly to produce a comprehensive African youth programme, both within the African Union as well as the NEPAD, underpinned by the programme,

- to promote democracy and a culture of human and people's rights – given that substantial portions of the African youth that do not have any experience of these, and whilst they know the cost of war, they do not know the rewards for peace and democracy;
- for a comprehensive human resources development, including programmes that attack illiteracy and lack of skills among the youth;
- for social development, covering such areas as sport, culture, arts;
- for youth economic empowerment and participation.

We must “NEPADise” the South African youth and create more political and socio-economic contact between them and other African youth, and engage the AU Commission, the Pan-African Parliament and the NEPAD Secretariat with regard to youth participation in these structures.

Globalisation

We have already referred to Uncle Jack Simon's lecture in the camps in exile, which emphasised the fact, way back during the late seventies, that we were already living in an era of globalisation, characterised amongst other things by the opening of the markets and trade.

This tendency towards global trade and the existence of a global market predates the advent of imperialism; it had already been observed centuries ago by Marx who had pointed out to the tendency for capital to travel across borders in an unprecedented manner that both spread wealth and, at the same time, poverty and inequality both within and between nation states.

Globalisation has created a situation of intensive and unprecedented integration and the formation of world economic, social, political and cultural systems that transcend the framework of individual states, and has made capital, labour, goods and services more mobile than at any other stage during the entire history of humanity.

It has rendered the industrial age redundant, and ushered the world into the information age, driven by the information and communications technology revolution together with the increasing socialisation of labour.

This, therefore, has buttressed the dominance of the capitalist mode of production, subjecting the world to the dominance and rule of finance capital and leading to the unbridled and unprecedented exploitation of the globe by a handful of advanced capitalist countries.

Globalisation, as it were, is an expression of the dominant mode of production in the world and is hence full of contradictions and crises, creating social disparities and iniquities between and within states, often leading to war, conflict and hostilities within and between nations.

This process has underscored the truth that there cannot be even development under capitalism, not even within the capitalist countries themselves, making it simply more difficult to wage a sustained and sustainable offensive against poverty and underdevelopment.

A characteristic feature of this epoch is the creation of massive life-threatening problems by this small group of developed countries, but problems which they cannot themselves solve, nor which can be solved within the framework of individual states, problems that call for the combined efforts of the whole humankind.

Fifty-seven years ago, in a speech celebrating India's independence on 14 August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru had made the profound remark that: "And so we have to labour and to work, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams

are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any of them to imagine that it can live apart”.

Re-Affirming multilateralism on a world scale

We have recently witnessed the resurgence of neo-fascism and neo-conservatives under the guise of the global war on terrorism, underpinned by illegal invasions and occupations of sovereign states and regime change.

The end of the Cold War left the United States with unprecedented and perilous power for a country that has not known what best to do with all the power that it commands.

The election of the Bush Administration placed in power in Washington the most conservative, short-sighted and therefore dangerous administration in recent history. It elevated to the leadership of the most powerful and influential country in the world a group of militarists who, since September 11th have enjoyed enormous power and authority.

The distinctive approach of the neo-conservatives is the use of military force in pursuit of economic goals, exploiting genuine concern about the global threat of terrorism to enforce change of governments in weaker states.

The reality is that humankind has for decades been faced with the threat terrorism; this is not a new phenomenon. However, the Rambo-style response to terrorism is neither politically and tactically judicious, nor is it sustainable; it only serves to guarantee the next wave of terrorism.

The attack on Iraq has posed urgent and dire challenges for the global community, including for the group of invaders.

The campaign on terror has been pursued with fanatical obsession and a petrifying single-mindedness that leaves no doubt that the campaign is about matters beyond terror itself. The pattern of interventions has obliterated any doubt that the strategic objective of the campaign on terror is the conquest of foreign oil markets and reserves.

The most worrisome development has been the sheer helplessness of the international multilateral forums and their inability to intervene to help

nations under siege. This would include countries targeted, invaded and occupied because of some flimsy linkages to terrorist groupings, and such other countries as Palestine which continue to be subjected to worst forms of state terrorism and brutality.

The fact is that the international community owes it to the Palestinian people to relieve them of the oppression and brutal injustice they have heroically endured for decades, and help them to regain their statehood and national self-determination, free from occupation, humiliation, injustice and terror!

Yet another fact is that those of us who live in the South, powerless against the rampant force of our Northern counterparts, depend very much on the multilateral fora for their advancement and defence.

Accordingly, we must continue to campaign for the transformation of the global systems of political and economic governance, especially the UN, UN Security Council, IMF, World Bank and WTO.

Early this year, world's progressive youth organisations under the International Union for Socialist Youth (IUSY) elected an African, for the first time in the 100-year history of this organisation, as its President. This, once more, catapulted us into the centre of world politics and imposed on us enormous obligations to discharge our responsibilities to place on the agenda of the progressive international youth movement the urgent aspirations of the African continent and the poor and developing countries.

What this Congress must do is both to express our gratitude, on behalf of our continent, to the IUSY member organisations, as well as to congratulate our Secretary General on his election to this high office.

The ANCYL has the duty to continue to play a prominent role in world politics, and to campaign for the forging of the progressive international youth movement for the creation of a better world.

Towards this end, we must seek better ways more closely to work with the anti-globalisation movement as a possible ally in the pursuit of our objectives. This movement must be seen as a global protest against the dominance of capital and the marginalisation of the popular voice; a response against the negative things that are inherent in the globalisation process; and a protest movement against global injustices.

Further, we must also re-ignite our active and prominent participation in the World Federation of Democratic Youth, to continue to be part of this very progressive force for change.

Both IUSY and WFDY have a duty to continue to place prominently on the international agenda the political and economic interests of Africa, as well as matters of youth development and empowerment.

The challenge to the broad progressive movement

Given the total range of challenges that we face, there is enduring need for the strengthening of the broad progressive movement for fundamental change in our country, at the heart of which is the tripartite alliance, led by the ANC.

The critical challenge is to unite the tripartite alliance in action and ensure that it functions as a cohesive force that is able to provide principled, consistent and wise ideological, political and strategic leadership to the masses of the people.

Together, the tripartite alliance must fight against the tendencies that threaten the unity and cohesion, both of the alliance itself as well as the masses of the people that still yearn for fundamental change in their lives.

At all times, the tripartite alliance must both respect each other's organisational independence and integrity and reinforce the agenda of the national democratic revolution led by the ANC.

Likewise, the progressive youth alliance faces similar challenges to fight against opportunism, sectarianism, careerism, and leadership-mongering disguised as the left-wing adventurism.

The challenge for the ANCYL is to continue both to build the tripartite alliance and the progressive youth alliance and, at the same time, to wage a sustained and ceaseless offensive against political and ideological opportunists in our ranks, dressed up as the "left".

The decisive challenge of the movement as a whole is to wage a sustained ideological offensive, especially amongst the youth, to ensure that young activists of the movement are properly cultivated.

Strategic tasks of the ANCYL

The Strategic Tasks of the ANC Youth League arise directly from the new epoch of reconstruction and development and the commencement of the second decade of our freedom. They are integral to those of the ANC, the youth and our people as a whole.

These tasks are not merely of the moment, but they articulate the future and bear direct relevance to the pursuit of the national democratic revolution. Hence, their pursuit cannot be left to chance. They are informed by the particular political and socio-economic realities of our country, especially how they affect young people. They are of such a nature that they take us directly into the Centenary of our movement, the ANC, in 2012. They reflect both the changing character of the ANCYL and they, themselves, change its character even further. These tasks must paint the picture of what we want to create and how we intend to create it.

As such, such are the broad tasks of the ANCYL: to

- build and consolidate the capacity of the youth and the youth sector, both for youth development as well as for reconstruction and development;
- continue to engage in the programme of social transformation, creating more space for the educational, health, sport, cultural and other upliftment of the youth;
- intensify the campaign for youth economic participation;
- empower young women, fight sexism and create gender equality;
- mobilise the youth for development, and develop them in order to mobilise them;
- mobilise the state, capital, labour and society as a whole for youth development;
- build a strong ANCYL as an agent and catalyst for change, deepen its roots and re-affirm its proud traditions and culture;
- unite the youth in action for peace, democracy and development in South Africa; and
- forge a broad progressive youth front for peace, democracy and development in southern Africa, Africa and the world.

A tribute to the fallen comrades and patriots

We hold this 22nd National Congress mindful of the fact that there are many patriots and comrades who perished during the period since the 21st National Congress. These included Isithwalandwe, Walter Sisulu, Isithwalandwe, Wilton Mkwayi, Joe Modise, Steve Tshwete, Dullah Omar, Peter Mokaba, Ephraim Mogale, Vusi Mzimela, Zibuse Zuma, Mzingisi Skweyiya, Mxabanisi Vovo Vimbe, Sphiwe Zuma, Brenda Fassie, Sipho Gumede, Gito Baloyi, Khabzela, Tebza of Mafikizolo and many others who, while they lived, made an indelible mark in our lives.

We salute these patriots for who they were and what they did for our country, and to each and everyone of them we say, Thank you for the lessons you left us. As the youth of the ANC we pledge never to depart from the cause of your struggles, to betray the cause to which you had dedicated your lives.

Seize the opportunities of democracy to confront the future!

This 22nd National Congress gives us the opportunity to focus on our organisation and its capacity to discharge its responsibilities among the youth of South Africa.

These few days we shall spend here must therefore be used effectively and seriously to ensure that we emerge better equipped for these challenges.

The challenges we have raised in this Political Report, rather sharply and provocatively, have been occasioned by the fact that our organisation has arrived at a new junction, calling for change in tactics and approach.

These new tasks spell out the emphatic message that we must continue to uphold the best traditions as well as the character of our organisation, and yet change our approach and tactics to certain issues of policy, programme and organisational development.

The organisational and political progress we have made since the 21st National Congress has raised new challenges of organisational and political work, but has also underscored the fact that the ANCYL remains a mass political youth organisation of the ANC, enjoying both the confidence of the youth and leading their pursuit for a better life.

The masses of the youth continue to trust that we are their political home, the custodian and champion of their political and socio-economic interests, and they trust that the ANCYL will not mislead them! They desire, quite rightly, a drastic change in their conditions and they know that the ANCYL is there to lead them in that endeavour.

We cannot afford to fail these youth, and neither can we fail our movement that expects that we will continue to discharge our responsibilities as the foot-soldiers of the revolution.

The 60th Anniversary calls on our maturity and unity in action in planning the future, and laying the seeds for further growth.

Always bear in mind, Comrades Delegates, that the ANCYL belongs to past and future generations; that the incumbent generations of its members and leaders are but mere transient custodians of its destiny; that this organisation was built through sweat, tears and blood and that therefore not one of us has the right to destroy it!

The NEC wishes our 22nd National Congress successful deliberations. We urge the Congress to walk along the proud path carved by our predecessors, and urge the delegates to remain disciplined throughout Congress, faithful to the mandates they are here to represent and the high expectations of our youth and our movement.

Comrades Delegates, it is my special privilege to commend before this, the 22nd National Congress, the 22nd Political Report.

Thank you!